

January 17, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, and Leader Jeffries:

The undersigned national medical organizations and state medical societies write to strongly urge Congress to quickly pass legislation to reverse the 3.37 percent Medicare physician payment cuts that took effect on January 1, 2024.

Failure to reverse these cuts will be harmful to the continued viability of physician practices and their ability to care for patients. After three consecutive years of cuts to Medicare services, physicians are at a potential breaking point. Facing a nearly 10 percent reduction in Medicare payments over the past four years and rising practice costs on top of the burdens and burnout associated with the pandemic, some practices are already limiting the number of Medicare patients they treat. We anticipate these cuts will be felt hardest by small, independent practices, like those in rural and underserved areas that continue to face significant health care access challenges. Continuing down this path is simply unsustainable.

We appreciate efforts by members of the House and Senate to preserve Medicare patients' access to physician services through introduced legislation that stops these impending cuts, hearings on the flawed Medicare payment system, and Dear Colleague letters urging Congress expeditiously pass bills halting the reductions. We call on Congress to eliminate these cuts in full by increasing the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Conversion Factor retroactive to January 1, 2024, by the appropriations deadline. This is our top legislative priority. Physicians are the only Medicare providers that did not receive an inflation update this year. In fact, they are the only Medicare providers who have a payment cut in 2024.

Medicare payment updates are scheduled for all providers in 2024 EXCEPT physicians.

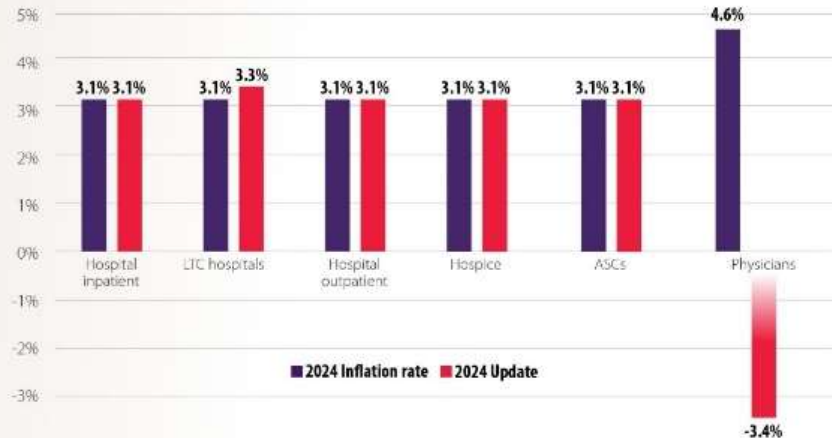
Medicare provider updates for 2024

Note:

Hospital inpatient, LTC hospitals, hospice, hospital outpatient and ASC inflation rates reflect market basket less a productivity adjustment.

Physician fee schedule inflation rate is the Medicare Economic Index, which has a productivity adjustment.

Potential adjustments for quality performance omitted for all provider types.



Updated Dec. 2023

We need to fix Medicare physician payment NOW.

The FY2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) included an extension of the Medicare sequester that added \$2.2 billion to the Medicare Improvement Fund – more than enough to offset stopping the 3.37 percent physician payment cuts in their entirety without adding to the federal deficit. Setting aside a portion of a Medicare Improvement Fund expansion that is partly financed by future cuts to Medicare physician payments is fair and precedented.

Nearly 200 Members recently wrote¹ Congressional leadership asking for the cuts to be stopped. We urge lawmakers to heed this call by working together and acting quickly to preserve access to care in the Medicare program. Anything less than full relief from the cuts negatively impacts our nation’s seniors. The physicians and the Medicare patients they treat deserve better.

Sincerely,

American Medical Association
AMDA—The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of Emergency Medicine
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Family Physicians

¹ <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2023-12-13-dear-colleague-medicare-payment-cuts-letter-au.pdf>

American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy
American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Pain Medicine
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Neuromuscular & Electromyography Diagnostic Medicine
American Clinical Neurophysiology Society
American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American College of Cardiology
American College of Chest Physicians
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Gastroenterology
American College of Lifestyle Medicine
American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics
American College of Mohs Surgery
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American College of Radiation Oncology
American College of Radiology
American College of Rheumatology
American College of Surgeons
American Gastroenterological Association
American Geriatrics Society
American Medical Group Association
American Medical Women's Association
American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society
American Psychiatric Association
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
American Society for Laser Medicine & Surgery, Inc.
American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society of Addiction Medicine
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgery
American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Nuclear Cardiology

American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Society of Retina Specialists
American Society of Transplant Surgeons
American Thoracic Society
American Urogynecologic Society
American Urological Association
American Vein & Lymphatic Society
American Venous Forum
Association for Clinical Oncology
College of American Pathologists
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Endocrine Society
Heart Rhythm Society
International Pain and Spine Intervention Society
Medical Group Management Association
National Association of Spine Specialists
North American Neuromodulation Society
Outpatient Endovascular and Interventional Society
Renal Physicians Association
Society for Vascular Surgery
Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography
Society of Critical Care Medicine
Society of Hospital Medicine
Society of Interventional Radiology
The American Society of Breast Surgeons
The American Society of Dermatopathology
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

Medical Association of the State of Alabama
Alaska State Medical Association
Arizona Medical Association
Arkansas Medical Society
California Medical Association
Colorado Medical Society
Connecticut State Medical Society
Medical Society of Delaware
Medical Society of the District of Columbia
Florida Medical Association
Medical Association of Georgia
Hawaii Medical Association
Idaho Medical Association
Illinois State Medical Society

Indiana State Medical Association
Iowa Medical Society
Kansas Medical Society
Kentucky Medical Association
Louisiana State Medical Society
Maine Medical Association
MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society
Massachusetts Medical Society
Michigan State Medical Society
Minnesota Medical Association
Mississippi State Medical Association
Missouri State Medical Association
Montana Medical Association
Nebraska Medical Association
Nevada State Medical Association
New Hampshire Medical Society
Medical Society of New Jersey
New Mexico Medical Society
Medical Society of the State of New York
North Carolina Medical Society
North Dakota Medical Association
Ohio State Medical Association
Oklahoma State Medical Association
Oregon Medical Association
Pennsylvania Medical Society
Rhode Island Medical Society
South Carolina Medical Association
South Dakota State Medical Association
Tennessee Medical Association
Texas Medical Association
Utah Medical Association
Vermont Medical Society
Medical Society of Virginia
Washington State Medical Association
West Virginia State Medical Association
Wisconsin Medical Society
Wyoming Medical Society